



FACT SHEET

Module 2

Preparing to Operate a Vehicle Vehicle Functions

Alert and Warning Lights

Instrument Panel

- It is essential to know what the alert lights, warning lights, and gauges on the instrument panel mean and where they are located.
- Become familiar with a vehicle by reading the owner's manual
- This will help prevent the driver from being caught off-guard should a problem arise.

Warning Symbols

Temperature light or gauge—This light/gauge warns you when the coolant in the engine is too hot or too low. If it comes on, pull off the road when safe and get professional help. Caution: never attempt to remove the radiator cap when the engine is hot.

Oil pressure warning light or gauge—This light/gauge warns you when the oil is not circulating at the proper pressure or there is not enough oil. This light/gauge does not tell you the amount of oil in the engine. It is recommended not to drive for too many miles should this occur.

Alternator/Generator warning light or gauge - Your vehicle's electrical system is in trouble if this light comes on or the gauge shows "discharge" while the engine is running.

- Discharge occurs when the alternator is not generating enough electricity to charge the battery.
- Be aware that if this happens the engine must use electricity stored in the battery
- Turn off as many electrical devices as possible (i.e., the radio, heater/AC, etc.)
- Caution: Have this checked without delay. If the battery is drained, the car can shut off.

Brake system warning light - This warning light serves two purposes:

- To show the parking brake is set before moving the vehicle.
- To alert you part or all of the braking system is not working properly or in some vehicles, the brake fluid is too low. If the brake system is not working properly, brake gradually to a stop, have the vehicle towed, and have the problem corrected.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) light—This alert light advises if the ABS is functioning properly. If the warning light comes on while driving, it indicates a problem with the system.

- Should this occur, have the problem corrected at a service center (i.e., car dealership, service station, etc.).

Air bag alert/warning light—This alert/warning light advises if the air bags are in proper working condition.

- When the ignition is turned on, the air bag alert light comes on for a few seconds, and then goes off.
- If the air bags are not in proper operating condition, the warning light will stay on.
- Have this problem corrected at a service center.

Service engine soon light—A computer monitors operation of a vehicle's fuel, ignition, and emission control systems.

- This alert light should come on when the ignition is on, but the engine is not running.

- If the alert light does not come on, have the system fixed right away.
- If the warning light stays on, or it comes on while driving, the computer is indicating that there is a problem.
- Take the vehicle to a service center.

Door ajar light—This comes on if a door(s) is not closed completely. The warning light will stay on until this is corrected.

- Caution: Do not try to open and close the door that is ajar while driving.

Low fuel warning light—The fuel gauge advises how much fuel is in the tank when the ignition is on (E is for empty, get some fuel; F is for Full). When the low fuel light activates, stop and refuel as soon as possible. The amount of fuel remaining when the light comes on may vary from vehicle to vehicle.